

C.A.R.E.

COORDINATED AGENCY RECOVERY EFFORT

C.A.R.E. is a multi-agency public outreach program to disseminate information about recovery efforts and potential storm impacts following the August/September 2009 California wildfires.

March 4, 2010

PROTECT YOURSELF AFTER THE DISASTER

While residents of at-risk communities along the foothills and within the Station Fire burn area remain vigilant for debris and mud flows, they must also safeguard against another potential threat – consumer fraud.

The Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs reports that while disaster brings out the best in people, it also encourages those who see disaster as a chance to take advantage of others.

According to the Department, it is not uncommon for victims of floods, fires or earthquakes to later find themselves victims of fraudulent practices such as price gouging, unlicensed contractors, phony “disaster officials,” water testing scams, bogus charities, or advance-free loans.

The Department is urging disaster victims to recognize fraudulent practices through its “Protect Yourself After the Disaster” link on its website at www.dca.lacounty.gov.

The link offers advice and tips on some of the most common practices as well as additional links to such agencies as the Department of Insurance, Contractors State Licensing Board, the Attorney General’s Office Charity Registration, the Department of Environmental Health, and the Department of Real Estate.

The Crescenta Valley Sheriff’s Station reports that, to date, there have been no reported incidents of fraudulent operators within the foothill communities.

However, as a service to at-risk residents, the Department of Consumer Affairs’ website is being linked to the Coordinated Agency Recovery Effort (C.A.R.E.) website at www.dpwcare.org. C.A.R.E. website visitors will also be able to download two of the Department’s publications – the “After the Disaster” brochure, and a tip sheet on “Hiring a Contractor.”

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